

Housing Navigator Pilot Request for Proposals

The NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is requesting proposals from nonprofit agencies interested in participating in a Housing Navigator Pilot Program. DCA will provide 12 months of funding to the successful applicants to support personnel, travel and marketing costs for a regional housing navigator position (one position for each region).

Issue: Many of DCA's housing assistance participants have difficulty securing decent housing units because of minimum income, poor credit, eviction history or criminal history. The goal of this pilot is to quickly move program participants that are homeless or at-risk of homeless into permanent housing.

Purpose of Proposal: To hire 3 Regional Housing Navigators to assist DCA voucher holders obtain permanent housing.

Available Funding: \$300,000; \$100,000 per regional contract.

Eligible Entities: Regional nonprofit organizations with at least 5 years of experience working with housing assistance programs and the homeless or at-risk of homelessness population.

Scope of Work: The Housing Navigator will be expected to do the following:

- Develop relationships with landlords; explain the benefits of DCA housing assistance programs
- Maintain a database of available units
- Conduct an assessment interview with each household referred to determine their needs and obstacles that they may face in a search for housing.
- Identify potential housing opportunities; assist household with completing housing applications
- Advocate for the household with prospective landlords
- Provide written information about landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities to both the program participants and landlords
- Review and explain the requirements of the lease in order to assist the program participants understand their responsibilities

Eligible Costs:

- Full-time navigator salary
- Mileage and gas reimbursement
- Development and printing of marketing information

Number of Contracts: 3 regional contracts

Northern Region: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Warren

Central Region: Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset, Union

Southern Region: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem

Contract Term: One year

Minimum Qualifications for a Navigator:

- **Education:** Bachelor's Degree
- **Experience:** Minimum of one year of experience in real estate, property management, or housing assistance
- **Skills:** Strong verbal and written communication skills; Proficient in Microsoft Office
- **Availability:** Monday through Friday, variable hours based on household needs
- **Driver's License:** Valid New Jersey MVC Driver License and a reliable personal vehicle

Required Proposal Content:

- **Agency Experience:** Provide a brief description of your agency. Describe your agency's experience with housing assistance programs, landlord engagement and your organization's staff capacity to perform the scope of work. Identify the staff that will provide oversight of the Housing Navigator. Identify whether your agency will use existing staff or will hire new staff. Please provide copies of resumes if using existing staff or a copy of the job description that will be posted for the Housing Navigator position. For new staff identify the schedule for recruiting, hiring and onboarding.
- **Program Description:** Describe the strategies that will be used by the Housing Navigator to do the following:
 - a. Engage landlords
 - b. Identify appropriate rental opportunities
 - c. Track available units
 - d. Address the obstacles that many households have to secure decent housing
 - e. Include a timeline
- **Budget:** Provide a comprehensive, itemized budget identifying all projected costs and expenses associated with the activities proposed in your application. Although not required, applicants will receive additional points if a 10% match is provided.

- **Required Attachments:**
 - a. Copy of 501c3 designation
 - b. Copy of By-Laws
 - c. Copy of Articles of Incorporation
 - d. Resumes
 - e. Timeline

- **Evaluation and Selection:** DCA will review all of the proposals submitted and make a decision based on the following factors. Maximum 100 Points
 - 1) Agency capacity to undertake the pilot (50 Points)
 - a. Appropriate staff and financial structure
 - b. Experience in employing a similar strategy

Marginal Response 1-5 Points	Acceptable Response Maximum 35 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 50 Points
The applicant's response was incomplete, lacks clarity and does not provide assurance as to their ability to perform the work proposed.	The applicant's response was clear, thorough and provides reasonable assurance as to their capacity to perform the work proposed.	The applicant's response provides significant assurance as to their capacity to perform the work proposed – the answers provided demonstrate a high level of expertise and capability.

- 2) Ability to implement the proposal in an effective and timely manner (35 Points)
 - a. Clear description of how the proposed activities will assist program participants secure permanent housing

Marginal Response 1-5 Points	Acceptable Response Maximum 20 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 35 Points
The applicant's response was incomplete and did not provide a clear description of activities	The applicant's response provided a clear description of project activities and how the proposed activities will help improve leasing. Timeline seemed reasonable.	The applicant's response provided a clear, detailed description of project activities and how the proposed activities will help improve leasing. Timeline seemed reasonable.

3) Budget

- a. Proposed costs are eligible, reasonable and clearly defined (15 Points)

Marginal Response 1-5 Points	Acceptable Response Maximum 10 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 15 Points
The applicant's response was incomplete and did not provide a clear description of the budget.	The applicant's response provided a clear description of the budget. Budget items were eligible, reasonable and substantiated.	The applicant's response provided a clear description of the budget. Budget items were eligible, reasonable and substantiated. Agency is providing a 10% match

- **Timeline:**

1. RFP posted on May 3, 2021
2. Proposals due by May 21, 2021
3. Awards announced on May 28, 2021
4. Commencement of grant- June 7, 2021

Submissions: Please email your application packet by May 21, 2021 to Sheri Malnak at sheri.malnak@dca.nj.gov